

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L OPORTO 0110

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT PO
SUBJECT: NORTHERN REACTION TO PSD LEADERSHIP CHANGE

REFS: A. LISBON 2935 181510 APR 78
B. LISBON 1967 01552 MAR 78
C. OPORTO A-10 MARCH 2 78

SUMMARY: A GENERAL MOOD IN THE NORTH OF INEVITABILITY GREETED
NEWS OF SA CARNEIRO'S RETURN TO PARTY. NORTHERN SOCIAL DEMO-
CRATS ARE NOT ANTAGONISTIC TOWARD SOUSA FRANCO BUT THERE
MIGHT HAVE BEEN A GRASS ROOTS REVOLT HAD SA CARNEIRO LOYALISTS
NOT REPLACED THE SOUSA FRANCO-LED NATIONAL POLITICAL COMMISSION.
SA CARNEIRO AND THE PSD REMAIN SYNONYMOUS TO SOCIAL DEMO-
CRATIC VOTERS. ANY LOCAL PSD LEADER IN THE NORTH WHO CROSSED
SA CARNEIRO BEFORE WON'T BE EASILY INCLINED TO DO SO AGAIN.
END SUMMARY

1. SA CARNEIRO'S INEVITABLE RETURN: THE LATEST CHANGES
IN THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP (REFTEL A) HAVE CAUSED
NO GREAT REACTION IN THE NORTH. IT WAS INEVITABLE ACCORDING
TO GENERAL OPINION THAT SA CARNEIRO RETURN TO PARTY CONTROL.
THE PSD MEMBERSHIP BELIEVED HE WOULD BE BACK SOONER OR LATER
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AND THE PREFERENCE WAS USUALLY "SOONER" (REFAIR). ON THE EVE
OF THE APRIL 15/16 COUNCIL MEETING, MANY AREA PSD CHAPTERS
CABLED THEIR SUPPORT OF SA CARNEIRO ACTING ON THEIR OWN
INITIATIVE.

2. NO ANTAGONISM BUT NO LOVE FOR SOUSA FRANCO. NO GREAT
ANTAGONISM IS FELT TOWARD SOUSA FRANCO. IF THERE ARE ANY

VILLAINS, THEY ARE THE "LISBON GROUP OF NINE" WHO SUPPORTED SOUSA FRANCO. THIS GROUP TOGETHER WITH A FEW NORTHERN PSD DISTRICT MEMBERS ARE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR RIGGING THE JANUARY FIFTH PARTY CONGRESS AGAINST SA CARNEIRO. THEY SHOULD RESUME THEIR "NATURAL MEMBERSHIP" IN THE SOCIALIST PARTY ACCORDING TO A PSD SMALL NORTHERN TOWN MAYOR IN AN APRIL 18 CONVERSATION WITH OPORTO CONOFF (MEMCON FOLLOWS). ONE OPORTO FIGURE, VIEIRA DA CUNHA, HAS ALREADY BEEN REPUDIATED. ANY OTHER NORTHERN PSD LEADERS SYMPATHETIC TO SOUSA FRANCO ARE EXPECTED TO FALL INTO LINE BEHIND SA CARNEIRO OR REDUCE THEIR LEVEL OF PARTY ACTIVITY.

3. LOCAL PSD AT A STANDSTILL. EXCEPT FOR ONE WEEKEND OF DISTRICT MEETINGS, A PARTY CAMPAIGN OF SUPPORT FOR THE SOUSA FRANCO LEADERSHIP NEVER GOT OFF THE GROUND. ON THE CONTRARY, LOCAL PSD POLITICAL ACTIVITIES HAVE ALMOST COME TO A STANDSTILL. ONE SOURCE FROM PSD CONTROLLED BRAGA COUNTRY-SIDE DESCRIBED SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC DISTRICT ACTIVITIES AS "ALMOST MORIBUND."

4. MORE PSD OPPOSITION IN THE FUTURE. THERE IS SOME EXPECTATION THAT WITH SA CARNEIRO'S RETURN TO PARTY CONTROL, THE NORTH WILL WITNESS MORE LOCAL PSD POLITICAL ACTIVITY. SOCIAL DEMOCRATS MAY INCREASE OPPOSITION AT CITY HALL LEVELS. ANOTHER ALTERNATIVE MAY BE RESIGNATION. TWO GUIMARAES CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS WHO HEADED THE PPD/PSD PARTY LIST IN THE DECEMBER CONFIDENTIAL

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1976 ELECTIONS RESIGNED LAST WEEK. BOTH ARE STRONG SA CARNEIRO SUPPORTERS. IT IS ALSO CONSIDERED LIKELY THAT THE PSD WILL BECOME MORE CRITICAL OF THE CDS AT LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEVELS.

5. COMMENT: THE PSD WOULD PROBABLY HAVE FACED A GRASS ROOTS REVOLT HAD THE NATIONAL COUNCIL NOT REACHED AN AGREEMENT APRIL 16 SATISFACTORY TO SA CARNEIRO. IT MIGHT WELL HAVE LED TO THE FORMATION OF A RIVAL PARTY. RANK AND FILE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS CONTINUE TO BELIEVE SA CARNEIRO AND TH PSD ARE SYNONYMOUS. WE ESTIMATE SA CARNEIRO WOULD BE APPROVED BY OVER 80 PER CENT OF THE PARTY VOTERS IN THE NORTH. ANY LOCAL LEADERS WHO CROSSED HIM IN JANUARY WON'T BE EASILY INCLINED TO DO SO AGAIN. PENNER

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